XIO3

GCACE

Garden City Atari Computer Enthusiasts
1003 Amphion St. Victoria, B.C. Canada V8S 4G2

MAY/JUNE 1997

Inside

ATARI® NEWS AND RUMOURS

by Rowland Grant

What was once Atari Corp is now three employees of JTS. Their job seems to be to sell as much of Atari's assets as possible. They have been very helpful in releasing encryption keys for new Jaguar games. They have been generous in releasing rights to some of the many software titles that are still held in Atari's name. Even TOS has been sold. Wizztronics wanted to buy TOS a couple of years ago but couldn't meet the price (rumoured to be $15,000). The price must be a lot lower now because Wizztronics finally did buy TOS and the rights to Atari's version of GEM. There are rumours that Wizztronics is now contacting Xerox and the present owner of Digital Research's assets to make sure that Wizztronics is in the clear if it uses, develops and licences TOS and GEM. Why Xerox? Well Xerox has the software patent on the whole graphic interface concept.

There is also unfinished business. A couple of years back Atari began a suit against Phillips. Atari claimed that Phillips didn't deliver on its contract to supply CD-ROM mechanisms and Atari suffered losses. Phillips countersued, saying that the Jaguar wasn't a good product, and Atari was a badly run company, so don't blame us. All of this is now moving towards the courts. Jeff Minter, programmer of Jaguar games, testified in pre-trial proceedings. He says that he tried to explain why the Jaguar was a good product. However once Jeff began talking about RISC chips and Gourand shading it all went over the lawyers' heads.

The surviving Atari staff are usually quite helpful. However, when they received a request for service manuals for the TT and STacy, that was too much. John Skrutch pointed out that Atari ceased making

See *News and Rumours* on Page 4

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $25 per family per year. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter, access to over 1000 8-bit public domain disks and 190 ST disks and increased time and upload/download ratio on the club BBS, Pothole. It can be reached by modem at (604) 642-6795.

MEETINGS

Meetings will be held in the Nellie McClung branch of the Library at 3950 Cedar Hill Road (corner of McKenzie) on the fourth Thursday of each month. All meetings are at 7 pm. There is no meeting in the month of December.

EDITORIAL

My apologies to Ed Hall, who sent an article which appeared in the last XIO3. His article, *Komputrz & Kre8ivity!,* is copyrighted, and I mistakenly omitted that information. Also, Ed lives in Yellowknife, N.W.T., not Whitehorse. Forty lashes with an 8-bit SIO cable for the idiot editor.

George Naylor attended our April meeting to announce his computer system was for sale. It consists of:

1. Mega4 STE with 120 meg harddrive
2. 14" mopno monitor
3. 14" colour monitor
4. Atari laser printer
5. Monitor Master switch
6. Calamus 1.09 DTP software
7. Notator 3.1
8. First Word 3.1
9. Word Perfect 4.2
10. Battle Chess

George is asking $999 or best offer. If interested, phone him at 382-7665.

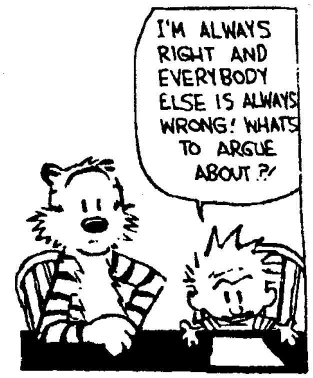
Gord

FOR HELP CALL:

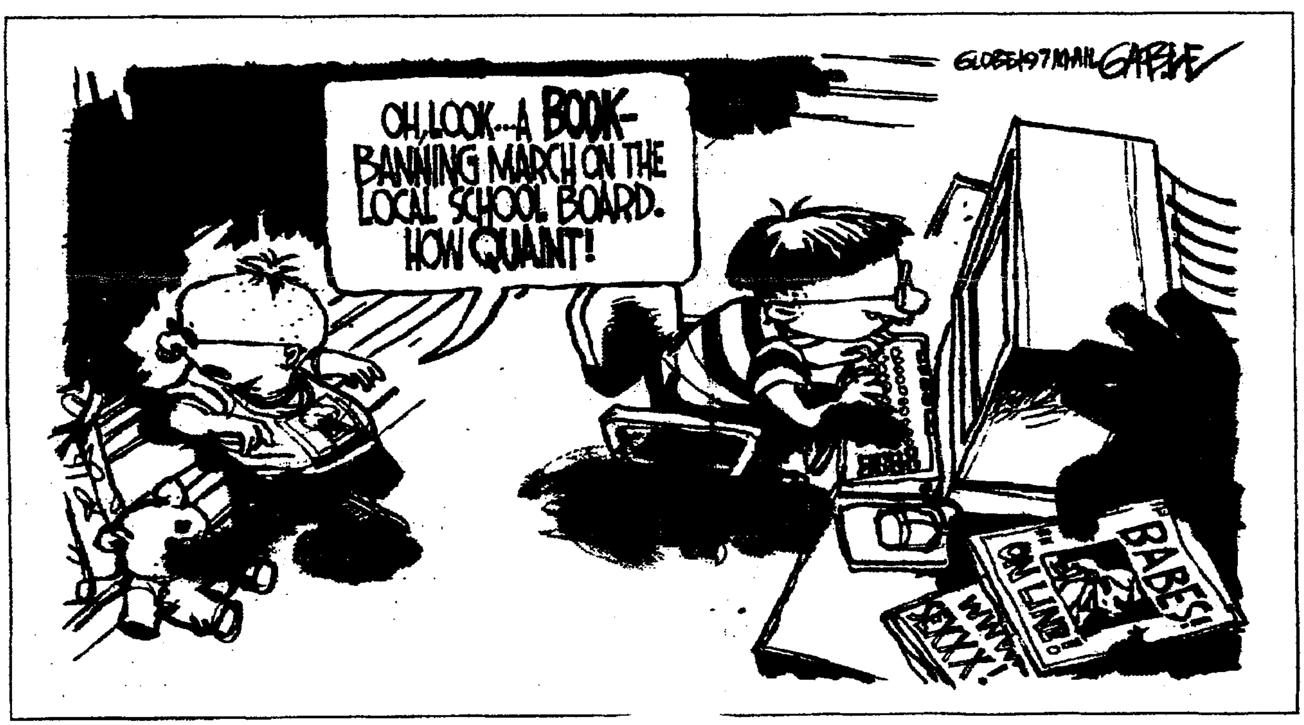
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16/32 Bit Applications:		
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Games	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
Telecommunication	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
TOS & Operating System	John Towler	382-5083
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Hardware:		
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Modem & printer setup	John Picken	598-2386
Other Computers:		
Apple Macintosh	John Towler	382-5083
Commodore Amiga	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
MS-DOS Computers	Rowland Grant	598-3661
	Bob Nex	642-6358

PEEKing Around

by Gordon F Hooper



... Welcome to new member ANNE HINDES. Anne got a nice system at a great price at a garage sale. She got a Mega2, hard drive and SLM804 laser printer. I won't make you angry by giving the price. LOUISE STEVENS joined after buying DAN MOENS STE. Dan says his new, expensive IBM hasn't crashed yet, but I'm anxiously waiting. RENE de BIE, from the Netherlands, also joined. Our club is now officially inter-continental! JOHN PICKEN sent him an Action! cartridge for his 8-bit, which induced him to join. As with all corresponding members, we will attempt to give any help requested, so all you non-Victorians keep sending us your requirements ... GEORGE ROSE has many boxes of brand new Polaroid 5.25 floppies for the 8-bit that he glommed at a garage sale. Phone and leave a message on his machine if you want some. He will be living retirement to the hilt this summer. He rented a space on the beach in Parksville for his trailer. This is kind of unique, in that you just have to walk from the beach to the nearest road and you are in the heart of downtown Parksville. There is an immense area of sand on this beach for sunbathing in bikinis, so I imagine MARLENE ROSE will see to it that the binoculars are extremely hard to find ... DENIS BATE missed the April general meeting due to undergoing an operation. I hope all is well now ... DOUG SKRECKY in Vancouver sent me some humorous items via e-mail last week. I laughed a lot. Unfortunately, I have SOME standards, so they will not see print here ... TED SKRECKY took two of my dead Atari 3.5 floppy drives home from the executive meeting at my place and discovered that one was only pseudo-dead. I let him have the really dead one for his efforts. I don't know about you, but the thought of Ted and a red-hot soldering iron frightens me ... ARNOLD NAPP and his wife NORAH have gone to spend the summer in Estonia. Ted Skrecky and Dan Moen taught a group of us how to use the PINE mail system on the FreeNet during a meeting at Arnolds. Ted also tracked down an Estonian daily newspaper on the Internet, enabling Arnold to keep track on events in his previous land ... Some of that x-rated humour Doug sent me consisted of a song sung to the tune of the old Beverley Hillbillies TV show theme song. It concerned a man named Bobbit and a certain appendage he had cut off. If you should hear of any GCACE members having the same problem, kindly phone GORD at 475-0857 with the gruesome details. It'll make the XIO3 front page headline for sure ...



Continued from Page 1

those computers more than five years ago, and it is a bit late requesting documents about them now. I understand that most of this stock is now in the hands of the few remaining Atari dealers such as B & C Computervisions and Best Electronics. I hear that most of the Atari corporate records are "in storage" and not easily available. As for JTS, its shaky position is becoming better known, and the JTS share price has dropped from a high of $5.81 to a recent price around $1.60.

New games for the Jaguar are still coming out. Iron Soldier II was to be released on CD ROMs. However the maker of the CD's ran into difficulties and the release was delayed. Finally Telegames decided to make copies of Iron Soldier II itself using a CD recorder. This is convenient for Telegames as it can make just enough to satisfy the demand. However, there is some concern about how long the recordings will last. The game is available now. Reviews are good. One user said that Iron Soldier II is the best game yet for the Jaguar, with excellent graphics, game play and sound.

Other games may be in the works. The 4Play group has released a 30 second commercial for BattleSphere. It shows a very impressive game. But I understand that the on-line video is marred by some immature and off colour narration. They used ICD's new video capture card to put the ad together. I notice that they are offering personalized copies of BattleSphere for anyone interested. So maybe this game will be released.

Another game that has surfaced is AirCars. This was advertised but not released by Atari. It was clearly not up to the standard for graphics, but it's supposed to be fun to play, especially in multi-player mode. It can network with up to eight Jaguar consoles.

There is some concern over *Current Notes*, the Atari magazine published in Canada. The last issue was received in January, and it's supposed to be a bimonthly magazine. I assume that the active staff, particularly Howard Carson have been rather busy lately. *Atari Computing* in Brit in is keeping its schedule. Issue 4 has been published and should be over here shortly. *ST Informer* has ceased publication. It is rumoured that Rod MacDonald, the owner of *ST Informer*, has promised refunds where they are due, but none have been sent so far. Now Rod Macdonald is thinking of a website Atari magazine available by password to subscribers. He is waiting for the availability of a PPP protocol web browser first. He says that he has issue 98 of *ST Informer* ready. It could be set up as the first on-line offering.

As far as PPP connection software is concerned, everybody seems to be working on it. The popular public domain ST internet Kit (STiK) works with the older SLIP protocol for web server connection. However, the latest version STiK 2.0 is taking shape under a team of seven programmers in Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, UK and USA, all working in their spare time. They say that it will finally implement both CSLIP and PPP, but there is still much to do. STiK works well with the popular Crystal Atari Browser (CAB). This is now a commercial product. Version 2.0 has been released to good reviews. It is much faster than earlier versions and can load frame-based pages. A demo version of CAB 2.0 in English is available. Gary Priest in the UK has announced a beta version of his POPwatch software. It works with STiK and the POP3 mailbox. POPwatch allows the user to retrieve, check and delete e-mail. It is multitasking, and has a kill file facility.

Oxo Systems in France are also working on a PPP connection package. They called the original dialup program WebSpace, but now that a collection of utilities will be added, the software has been renamed WenSuite. At the moment Oxo's software is reported to be something like a combination of CAB and STiK with PPP dialup and access to web pages written in HTML. It doesn't show pictures on line. There is no e-mail or news utility. A demo version is available but it will only fully connect to Oxo's own web page. The general opinion is that WebSpace/WenSuite needs work. Oregon Research is still working on its Termite package for the ST. This is a port of the package now running on the Amiga. Almost all of the utilities needed will be supplied with the terminal control program. This will provide one of the few integrated net/web packages available for TOS computers.

For awhile it began to look like ICD was forsaking its Atari related products. However, Tom Harker has announced that a new version 7 of his popular ICD SCSI Pro Software is available for beta testing. Tom didn't give the full specifications, but I understand that there are a some major additions and improvements. Chris Krowchuk of Computer Direct announced that Texel, a super spread sheet program has now been released. Orders are being

See ***News and Rumours*** **on Page 5**

Continued from Page 4

taken for it at a price of $100 US.

The Atari Falcon's release in the US was delayed because it couldn't get approval from the FCC. I presume that it leaked too much video signal. However a more powerful (possibly 68040) version of the Falcon did get approval right off. Alas they didn't put the better version into production. Now Magnus Kollberg reports seeing photos of the prototype. Magnus calls it the "Micro Falcon". It had a compact motherboard, about half the size of the Falcon030, with three 32-bit expansion slots. The Micro Falcon had a handsome case with a separate keyboard. Too bad the Tramiels didn't issue the Micro Falcon rather than the Falcon030 in its made-over 1040 case. At least the Micro Falcon looked like a new type, and it would have made the Falcon's high initial price more acceptable.

Too bad the Tramiels didn't issue the Micro Falcon ....

GCACE MEETINGS

PageStream Demo

by Rowland Grant

The March General Meeting was our annual swap and shop. Steve Lemmen brought a lot of software. He also brought magazines. Many of these he gave away. There were all kinds of bargains. New software is hard to find, but a lot of the old software is still relevant, especially on old Atari computers like mine. There was some hardware for sale by others, but there were no takers. Locally we have become the main market for used Atari equipment. And many of us have a surplus of hardware already. Of course if the asking price is low enough, the collectors might buy (you know who you are).

Lost in all the buy and sell excitement was the demonstration of our CD-ROM setup. Gordon Hooper brought his CD ROM unit with a Link2 interface. This was connected to my Mega ST2. We used Extendos software. I found that Extendos didn't like Neodesk 3.02. It preferred to run on the standard desktop. Ted Skrecky brought along his two Crawly Crypt public domain CD's. It was necessary to put the CD-ROM into the drive, switch the drive on, and then turn on the computer. Extendos ran from the Auto folder. There is a CD drive icon. Click on it and you get a standard looking directory with a large number of folders. We experimented moving files from CD to disk. Everything transferred properly. It worked! John Towler also brought several CD's, but we didn't have time to try them out. We were unable to get the directory of the next CD without turning off the computer and starting over. Maybe there is a better way, but we haven't figured it out.

Craig Carmichael demonstrated Page Stream at the April General Meeting. Many club members have tended to use some version of Calamus for desk top publishing. Craig uses PageStream because he has found it to be the best for his purposes. He has used Calamus on his TT, and Quark Express (I think he said) on his Macintosh computers. He showed how PageStream can do most of the things that Calamus does, except that PageStream does it with greater ease. Craig demonstrated the realigning and resizing of headings, on the fly as it were. He showed how easy it is to precisely locate and move object images around on the page using PageStream. Compared to the Macintosh software, PageStream gave superior printed results too. The latest version of PageStream for TOS computers is only $39.95 (US). It can beat out software costing three hundred and more. We thanked Craig for his well prepared, impressive demonstration. We should have also thanked him for reminding us once again that each computer type and each piece of software has its own strengths and weaknesses. The latest computer and the most expensive software does not always deliver the results that you need.

John Towler continues to find all sorts of interesting items for the ST disk of the month. In March there was ADRES204 a hypertext address book and the latest version of HSMODEM. The April disk had four folders. ASSIGN is a utility to help create ASSIGN.SYS files, handy if you are using GDOS. CONVERT strips out HTML code from internet files to create ASCII. FINGR12 works with STiK to check e-mail. And QED-390 is the latest version of this powerful text editor. Thanks again to John for the time taken and expense incurred in finding this software. And

See *Meetings* on Page 6

New 8-Bit!

by Rowland Grant

Another issue of *Atari Classics* has finally appeared, almost a year late. The cover lists it as Fall 1996, Volume 5, Number 2. It has the tag line "for the patient 8-bit user". I understand that the long time between issues is due to the lack of contributors. It takes awhile to accumulate enough material to justify publishing. The printing was being readied in the Fall, but Jim Hood, the editor and publisher died. Most of the issue was devoted to Bob Woolley's IDE hard drive expansion and Bob's articles took longer to prepare than expected.

Atari Classics is very well turned out with clear photos of the innards of Bob Woolley's Atari 1200 XL and professional looking circuit diagrams. The issue is printed using offset lithograph. However, only the cover will be lithographed for future issues, all the other pages will be Xeroxed. This will make publishing more flexible. There were five articles by Bob Woolley, one by Ed Hall and one by Paul Alhart. Six more hardware articles have been proposed over the next year or so. Bob Woolley has assumed all responsibility for *Atari Classics*, and will continue it as long as possible. Contributors, subscribers and advertisers are badly needed however.

Club Cenacle in France is an 8-bit club that publishes regular newsletters (*News-Quick*), special issues dedicated to one topic (*Special-Quick*) and a major magazine called *Cenacle-News*. It took three years to accumulate enough articles to create the latest *Cenacle-News* issue 13. The Editor, Remi Gallopin, says that this is the last of *Cenacle-News*, as most of the contributors have since left the Club. He will concentrate more on the regular newsletter. *Cenacle-News* was issued with two disks of interesting software. One disk is full of games and utilities, the other has a clever demo (from Poland of course) and an assembly language tutorial.

The Atari Bit Byter User Club in Germany (ABBUC) publishes a regular newsletter each quarter and two special issues. ABBUC has no lack of contributors. The newsletter is in German of course. In Issue 48 I noticed an article by Robert Verdaasdonk in Holland. Robert is sysop Fox-1, and is often seen on our part of Express Net. His article is written in the form of a long letter in which he describes a demo program, his hardware (four elaborate systems), his 8-bit adventures on his trip to Poland and much else. Jiri Bernasek in the Czech Republic contributed an article about the latest improvements to his excellent BW-DOS. Stephan Pollok (in Germany) contributed an article called the Demo Overview. It is indeed, as he lists about 360 demo programs for the Atari 8-bit giving title, date, pd status and size. There were a lot more articles and letters, but several on hardware caught my eye. One by Stefan Birmanns discussed other uses for the MSC IDE harddisk controller. This controller was developed by Stefan Birmans and Matthias Belitz. Apparently their IDE controller can be made to access other devices including Zip drives and CD ROM drives.

Curt Vendel and two friends have begun a project to create a new Atari 8-bit computer. They propose to create a new motherboard, and put it in a standard PC case with an enclosed power supply and detachable keyboard. The computer will have ports for monitor, cartridge, joystick and SIO. In addition they propose to add a port for a RGBI monitor such as the Atari SC1224. A new operating system will include an 80 column text mode. That should look good on an RGB monitor. A built in disk drive interface was considered, but it was felt that this would make the board too expensive. However the circuit board will include a number of slots for internal circuit cards. These slots could contain interfaces for any devices. The case would be large enough to house a disk drive, a hard drive and other devices. A card for disk drives is planned, as is a card for centronics parallel and standard serial interface. A card for a VCS 2600 emulator is being considered. In addition a card for an alternate CPU such as a 65816 is possible. This computer should be a hardware hacker's dream. I didn't see any reference to provisions

See *8-Bit* on Page 7

Meetings

Continued from Page 5

if you are really lacking for PD software, Ted can copy ST filesfrom his CD's. Some of these files are quite large, so bring enough formatted disks. A table of contents for the Crawly Crypt CD's is available on disk from the library.

Continued from Page 6

for extra RAM. A socket for a SIM boards would be handy too. Standard parts and chips are available in fair abundance for this project through B & C Computervisions and other suppliers. If there is enough interest, Curt will arrange to have units made for sale. He will require orders for about one hundred to achieve a price for a base unit computer of $120 to $150. The project should be ready for release early in 1998.

There has been little news concerning Atari 8-bit emulators lately. David Firth has released his latest version of the Atari800 emulator for MS-DOS computers. He has also released source code that can be compiled to create the Atari800 on Linux/Unix computers. The Linux version now has sound support using Ron Fries Pokey Sound Emulation library. There is a new cartridge format for emulators. The cartridge code comes with a header that identifies the type. There may be some problem emulating bank switched cartridges though.

Dareck Mihoka has announced that his PCXformer 8-bit emulator software will no longer be sold separately. It will be sold as part of a general emulator software package for the PC. This includes the Gemulator ST emulator and a Macintosh emulator. Dareck develops and sells this software as a spare time business. He has time to market only one product. The latest versions including Gemulator 97 will be available this summer. Dareck will no longer sell the Xformer cable either. But this can be obtained from other vendors. He has published instructions on how to build these cables. They connect Atari 8-bit disk drives to the printer ports of ST and PC computers. Originally the Xformer cable for the ST differed from the cable for the PC. Now there is a new circuit that works equally well on either computer.

Mark Wang reports that he put 800XL computers in metal cases and used them to control machines. The computer is connected through the joystick ports to an amplifier which drives the stepper motors. Mark says that he really pressed the envelope in writing software that would provide the precise timing and fast response required. He put his software in home made cartridges. His computers are mostly used to control metal surface grinders and cylindrical grinders. Mark says that if you see a machine with a monitor attached showing text in GRAPHICS 2, the controller unit is probably one of his.

Steven Tucker has been too busy of late to do much work on his APE software. APE runs on a PC and turns it into a slave device for an Atari 8-bit. He has recently improved the program loader however. Frequently the 8-bit software is stored on the PC as a disk image file. Sometimes extra bytes are added to these files when they are created. This could prevent binary code programs from running. Sidney Cadot has developed BINTRIM, a utility package for fixing these binary files. BIN shows you where in the program code the appended bytes are. TRIM cuts them off.

Apparently William Kendrick has established a Star Raiders Tribute page on the web. Star Raiders was done by Atari engineer Doug Neubauer in his spare time. It was beta tested by the other Atari employees during lunch hour. Many people bought Atari 800's just to play the game. Even now, some of the effects, such as the photon torpedoes have not been matched. Doug is a hardware engineer. He wasn't contracted to write games, so he wasn't paid anything extra for Star Raiders. Typical Atari. They didn't foster talent, they only exploited it.



ZANETTI

GCACE Financial Report

Date: May 8, 1997

EXPENSE SUMMARY - 1997

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YR-TO-DT
Printing	26.34	-	30.50	-	-	-	$56.84
News. post	28.56	-	30.12	-	-	-	$58.68
Postage	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Room rent	21.40	21.40	21.40	21.40	-	-	$85.60
Office sup	-	-	1.69	-	-	-	$1.69
Disks	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Telephone	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Advertise	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Mag. subsc	35.00	-	-	-	-	-	$35.00
Coffee sup	3.02	-	3.68	7.57	-	-	$14.27
Bank chg.	1.20	0.60	0.60	0.60	-	-	$3.00
Currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Society Ac	-	15.00	-	-	-	-	$15.00
Expen Misc	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Cash......	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
Cash (Net)	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
TOTAL	115.52	37.00	87.99	29.57	-	-	$270.08

INCOME SUMMARY - 1997

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YR-TO-DT
Dues	175.00	50.00	80.00	25.00	-	-	$330.00
PD disks	11.00	-	10.00	10.00	-	-	$31.00
Donations	10.00	-	10.00	-	-	-	$20.00
Coffee	5.00	-	12.25	6.00	-	-	$23.25
Bank intst	-	-	-	0.64	-	-	$0.64
Incom Misc	-	-	-	-	-	-	$0.00
TOTAL	201.00	50.00	112.25	41.64	-	-	$404.89
CASH FLOW	85.48	13.00	24.26	12.07	-	-	$134.81

Date: May 8, 1997

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

< Confirmed >		> ACCOUNT	< < Unconfirmed	. . . .		Unconfirmed > >	
Balance	Date	* * *	Deposits	Debits	Oldest	Newest	Balance
$780.53	Apr 30	Checking	$0.00 (0)	$0.00 (0)	-	-	$780.53
$5.00	Dec 95	Float	$0.00 (0)	$0.00 (0)	-	-	$5.00
$149.80	Apr 30	Ppd room	$0.00 (0)	$0.00 (0)	-	-	$149.80
$0.00	Apr 30	To deposit	$0.00 (0)	$0.00 (0)	-	-	$0.00